



HYPERSENSITIVE SECURITY

New drug and explosives scanners, so sensitive that they can tell if you even *touched* a dangerous object days ago, may soon be coming to airports. The walk-through scanners are faster, more accurate and less invasive than any technology currently out there.

The trouble is that the machines touted for the job are *too* sensitive. The new detectors on trial offer atomic, single molecular or part-per-trillion level detection of explosives and drug-related chemical compounds—which raises the spectre of false-positive results.

It is well known that over 90 per cent of US banknotes in circulation have minute traces of cocaine on them. US Customs spokesman Bill Anthony told a story about a machine he once tried out that scans money for traces of drugs, but it delivered instead a lesson on how many hands your dollar bills probably pass through in a week.

"We took some of our commissioner's money—we got it out of a cash machine—and it showed traces of drugs. I put my money through. And mine all showed up with drugs," he said.

A similar test conducted in the UK found similar results.

(Sources: ABCNews.com, 26 September 2000; Intelligence, 26 June 2000)

CAN FM RADIOWAVES PREDICT EARTHQUAKES?

In 1993, after roughly examining the correlation between abnormal electric waves and earthquakes, astronomer Yoshio Kushida was convinced that some fluctuating patterns in the VHF band appear several days before an earthquake.

Having analysed radio echoes from a number of FM stations across the country, Kushida believes he has found five basic wave patterns that appear several days before a major earthquake.

From January 1997 to September 1999,

Kushida, using these patterns, predicted specific date, strength and location of focus of 36 major earthquakes measuring a magnitude of 5 or stronger. The average margin of error in the dates predicted was 1.97 days. Kushida now claims he can specify the focus of most earthquakes within a radius of 50 kilometres.

The Institute of Physical and Chemical Research, a major quasi-governmental think tank, independently examined the correlation between earthquakes and Kushida's predictions and concluded the results were not random.

According to Kushida's hypothesis, before an earthquake electric charges accumulate on the Earth's surface due to the generation of numerous micro-cracks in magma. The charge and

discharge process of a capacitor formed with the Earth's surface and the ionosphere changes the density of electric plasma in the ionosphere, and the phenomenon is observed by the FM receiver.

(Source: The Japan Times, 19 September 2000, www.japantimes.co.jp/. For further information, access www.yatsugatake-eorc.org/ or fax Yatsugatake South Base Observatory at +81 [0]551 38 4254.)

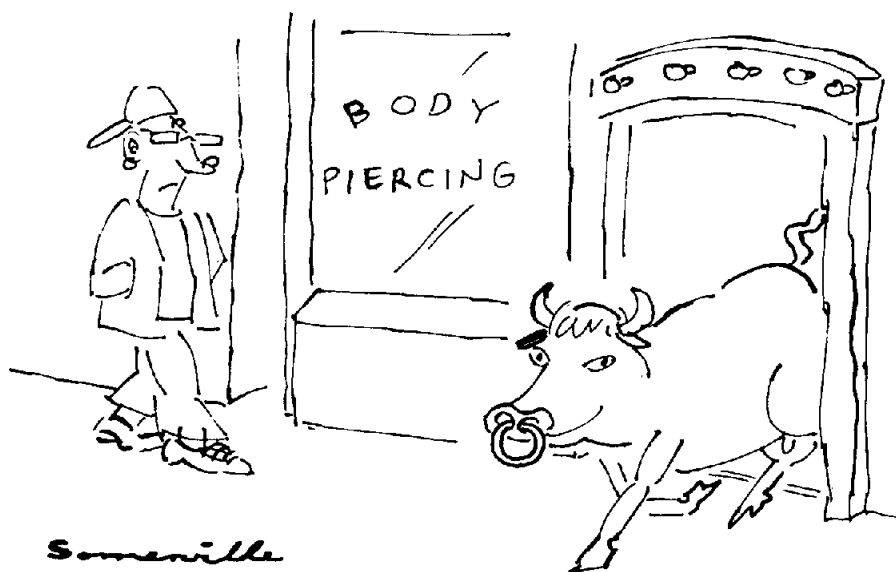
AIRCRAFT CRASHES BLAMED ON MILITARY JET PULSES

Electromagnetic pulses from military aircraft may have been responsible for several civilian airline disasters in the past four years. If the theory is proved correct, it suggests navy ships and air force planes pose a lethal threat to passenger flights.

Crash investigators have been startled by similarities between several tragedies. In particular, they have uncovered common features in two crashes: Swissair 111, on 2 September 1998, and TWA 800, on 17 July 1996.

Both planes took off from the same airport, New York's JFK, on a Wednesday, at the same time, 8.19 pm. Both followed the same route over Long Island. Both reported trouble in the same region of airspace, and both suffered catastrophic electrical malfunctions. And on both occasions, the planes were flying at a time when extensive military exercises, involving submarines and US Navy P3 fighter planes, were being conducted.

(Source: The Observer, London, 10 September 2000, www.observer.co.uk/)



EURO-FEDERALISTS FINANCED BY US SPY AGENCIES

Declassified United States government documents show that the US intelligence community ran a campaign in the 1950s and 1960s to build momentum for a united Europe. It funded and directed the European federalist movement.

The documents confirm suspicions voiced at the time that America was working aggressively behind the scenes to push Britain into a European state. One memorandum, dated July 26, 1950, gives instructions for a campaign to promote a fully-fledged European Parliament. It is signed by Gen. William J. Donovan, head of the American wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), precursor of the CIA.

The documents, found by Joshua Paul, a researcher at Georgetown University in Washington, include files released by the US National Archives.

Washington's main tool for shaping the European agenda was the American Committee for a United Europe, created in 1948. The chairman was Donovan, ostensibly a private lawyer by then. The vice-chairman was Allen Dulles, the CIA director in the 1950s. The board included Walter Bedell Smith, the CIA's first director, and a roster of ex-OSS figures and officials who moved in and out of the CIA.

The documents show that ACUE financed the European Movement, the most important federalist organisation in the post-war years. In 1958, for example, it provided 53.5 per cent of the movement's funds.

The European Youth Campaign, an arm of the European Movement, was wholly funded and controlled by Washington. The Belgian director, Baron Boel, received monthly payments into a special account. When the head of the European Movement, Polish-born Joseph Retinger, bridled at this degree of American control and tried to raise money in Europe, he was quickly reprimanded.

The leaders of the European Movement—Retinger, the visionary Robert Schuman and the former Belgian Prime Minister Paul-Henri Spaak—were all treated as hired hands by their American sponsors. The US role was handled as a covert operation. ACUE's funding came from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations as well as business groups with close ties to the US government.

The head of the Ford Foundation, ex-

OSS officer Paul Hoffman, doubled as head of ACUE in the late 1950s.

The State Department also played a role. A memo from the European section, dated June 11, 1965, advises the Vice-President of the European Economic Community, Robert Marjolin, to pursue monetary union by stealth. It recommends suppressing debate until the point at which "adoption of such proposals would become virtually inescapable".

(Source: *By Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, The Telegraph, London, 19 September 2000, www.telegraph.co.uk*)

BUSH BEATS GORE IN THE BLUE-BLOOD STAKES

If royal genes have anything to do with electoral success, then Republican US presidential candidate George W. Bush will be the next man in the White House, according to Britain's blue blood "bible".

Burke's Peerage, a respected guide to the breeding of the aristocracy, said that both Bush and his rival Al Gore are of royal descent, but investigations deep into their heritage show Bush has far more noble and royal connections.

Bush is closely related to every European monarch on and off the throne—including the King of Albania—and has kinship with every member of Britain's royal family, the House of Windsor.

He is a 13th cousin of Britain's Queen Mother, and of her daughter Queen Elizabeth, and is a 13th cousin once removed of the heir to the throne, Prince Charles. Bush's family tree can be docu-

mented as far back as the early 15th century. He has a direct descent from Henry III and from Henry VIII's sister Mary Tudor, who was also the wife of Louis XI of France. He is also descended from Charles II of England.

"Never in the history of the United States have two presidential candidates been as well endowed with royal alliances," said Harold Brooks-Baker, publishing director of *Burke's Peerage*.

Brooks-Baker said there had always been a significant "royalty factor" in those who aspired to the White House, with Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, among others, all boasting blue-blood links.

Democrat candidate Al Gore, who is currently lagging George W. Bush by one point in opinion polls ahead of US elections in November, has a less illustrious gene pool.

Being a descendant of Edward I, he is also a cousin of former US President Richard Nixon, who resigned from the White House in 1974 for his part in the Watergate scandal.

However, Gore does have direct links to the Holy Roman Empire. He is a descendant of Roman Emperors Louis II, Charles II and Louis I and is therefore also a direct descendant of Charlemagne, the eighth-century Emperor.

The problem is, Gore's Charlemagne links also make him a cousin of George W. Bush.

(Source: *Reuters, London, 17 October 2000*)



SOLAR STUDIES MAY SHED LIGHT ON GLOBAL WARMING

A new hypothesis, pioneered by Henrik Svensmark of the Danish Space Research Institute in Copenhagen, links the amount of cosmic rays that strike Earth with cloud formation, which in turn affects atmospheric temperatures.

The Earth's magnetic field deflects many electrically charged particles, such as protons and atomic nuclei misleadingly known as cosmic "rays". The rest penetrate the atmosphere, where the shower turns electrically neutral air molecules and airborne vapours into charged ions. In that condition, two UCLA scientists argued in *Geophysical Research Letters* earlier this year, molecules are more prone to cluster into aggregations that make dense low-level clouds that shade the planet's surface. High, thin clouds typically warm the planet by trapping outgoing heat in the sky. But thick, umbrella-like low clouds have a net cooling effect.

By this logic, when the Sun's magnetic field is stronger—as it is, for example, during high sunspot activity—it deflects more cosmic rays, preventing them from hitting air molecules. Fewer cosmic rays mean fewer clouds, which means more warming.

Svensmark and colleagues reported their latest results at a conference, held in Spain during September, on "The Solar Cycle and Terrestrial Climate". Using data from the

International Satellite Cloud Climate Project, they found that the amount of cloud cover at elevations of two miles or lower is directly related to cosmic ray levels—at least over the period for which satellite data are available.

But Earth has been warming for more than a century. Has the Sun's field been strengthening that long?

Yes, according to Michael Lockwood and colleagues at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in England, who published exactly that result in the journal *Nature* last year.

Analysing instrument measurements taken since 1868, they concluded that the Sun's exterior magnetic field has increased by 230 per cent since 1901 and by 40 per cent since 1964.

(Source: The Washington Post, 9 October 2000)

FDA ADVISORS TIED TO PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

More than half of the experts hired to advise the US government on the safety and effectiveness of medicines have financial relationships with the pharmaceutical companies that will be helped or hurt by their decisions, a *USA Today* study has found.

These experts are hired to advise the Food and Drug Administration on which medicines should be approved for sale,

what the warning labels should say and how studies of drugs should be designed.

The experts are supposed to be independent, but *USA Today* found that 54 per cent of the time they have a direct financial interest in the drug or topic they are asked to evaluate. These conflicts include helping a pharmaceutical company develop a medicine, then serving on an FDA advisory committee that judges the drug.

The conflicts typically include stock ownership, consulting fees or research grants.

Federal law generally prohibits the FDA from using experts with financial conflicts of interest, but the FDA has waived the restriction more than 800 times since 1998.

These pharmaceutical experts, about 300 on 18 advisory committees, make decisions that affect the health of millions of Americans and billions of dollars in drugs sales. With few exceptions, the FDA follows the committees' advice.

The FDA reveals when financial conflicts exist, but it has kept details secret since 1992, so it is not possible to determine the amount of money or the drug companies involved.

(Source: USA Today, 25 September 2000, www.usatoday.com/news/)

SOUL-SEARCHING DOCTORS CONFIRM LIFE AFTER DEATH

A recent scientific study of "near-death" experiences (NDEs) has found new evidence to suggest that consciousness or the "soul" can continue to exist beyond "death".

The findings, by Dr Peter Fenwick, a consultant neuropsychiatrist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, and Dr Sam Parnia, a clinical research fellow and registrar at Southampton General Hospital, were based on a year-long study of heart attack survivors, and could provoke fresh controversy over that most profound of questions: is there life after death?

Reports of "near-death" experiences, in which people close to death have vivid encounters with bright lights and heavenly beings, date back centuries, but the phenomenon has been treated with scepticism by most academics.

The new study concludes, however, that a number of people have almost certainly had these experiences after they were pronounced clinically dead. This would suggest that the mind or consciousness can survive the death of the brain.



During the study period, 63 cardiac arrest patients survived and were interviewed within a week. Seven survivors had NDE memories, but only four passed the Grayson scale—the strict medical criteria for assessing near-death experiences.

Dr Sam Parnia commented: "I started off as a sceptic but, having weighed up all the evidence, I now think that there is something going on.

"Essentially, it comes back to the question of whether the mind or consciousness is produced from the brain. If we can prove that the mind is produced by the brain, I don't think there is anything after we die because essentially we are conscious beings.

"If, on the contrary, the brain is like an intermediary which manifests the mind, like a television will act as an intermediary to manifest waves in the air into a picture or a sound, we can show that the mind is still there after the brain is dead. And that is what I think these near-death experiences indicate."

(Source: The Telegraph, London, 22 October 2000, www.telegraph.co.uk)

THE MICROCHIP THAT COULD BLOW YOUR MIND

A newly developed microchip, implanted into the body, will allow two people to share each other's pain, movement and even sexual excitement, claims an expert in artificial intelligence. The microchip could even see the "faked orgasm" banished from the bedroom and bring an end to the battle of the sexes, says its inventor, Professor Kevin Warwick.

Designed as a body implant, the chip will transmit signals from the nervous system of one person to that of another via an incision in the arm, enabling them to feel what the other is feeling. A transmitter is connected to nerves in the centre of the arm and the chips are then linked via an ordinary computer.

Besides the possible benefits for couples, Professor Warwick has also evaluated the possible damage that could be caused by the pioneering experiment.

"The biggest problem, apart from possible nerve damage and loss of feeling or movement, is mental," he said. "Will my brain be able to cope? The biggest risk is that I could go crazy."

(Source: Ananova, 5 October 2000, www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_76805.html?nav_src=newsIndex+headline)

VACCINES CONTAMINATED WITH MAD COW DISEASE?

On Friday 20 October, the UK Department of Health issued a recall notice for polio vaccines after it was found that the manufacturer, Medeva, had breached production health guidelines. Of particular concern is Medeva's use of potentially contaminated material from British cattle.

Eleven million doses of polio vaccine-containing material from British cattle have been administered to children and adults since BSE (mad cow disease) vaccine guidelines banned its use in 1989, according to the Department of Health.

The drug factory at the centre of the polio vaccine scandal has a history of contamination and production blunders, leading to fears that its vaccines against other diseases are unsafe.

Last year, investigators from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) were horrified by the conditions they found at the plant in Speke, near Liverpool, which also makes vaccines against flu, tuberculosis, tetanus and hepatitis B.

The Department of Health was forced to recall Medeva's oral polio vaccine after it was discovered that the firm had been using potentially BSE-infected material.

However, the problems surrounding the polio vaccine may prove to be the tip of the iceberg. A week-long inspection by the FDA last summer into the production of Fluvirin flu vaccine at the plant found Medeva had failed to:

- "clean, maintain and sanitise equipment at appropriate intervals to prevent malfunction or contamination";
- maintain systems to prevent unacceptable levels of toxins and bacteria contaminating the production process;
- ensure batches of vaccines "conformed with all established standards, specifications and characteristics"; and
- prove that vaccines would be free from "bacteria and fungi".

In October 1999, the FDA's director of compliance, Steven Masiello, fired off an official warning letter to Medeva's head of primary production, John O'Brian, telling him to sort out the problems or have its product banned from entering the US. Fluvirin is used by some 20 million Americans and more than a million British people, many of them elderly. Although the extent of the excess levels of toxins and bacteria at the Speke factory is not known, in extreme cases contaminated vaccines can lead to severe adverse reactions, including toxic shock and fever. In the old and fragile, the impact could be lethal. The FDA letter contains the disclosure that instead of dealing with the problems, managers at the plant wanted to raise the level of contamination deemed to be acceptable.

Sources familiar with the company's operations claim that there were serious production problems running through the factory and abuses were routinely ignored. Although it is not known what other contamination problems the factory had, it is known that production difficulties were not confined solely to the manufacture of the flu vaccine.

Liberal Democrat consumer affairs spokesman Norman Baker is now calling for an immediate investigation into events at the Speke factory and a full explanation from the Department of Health. He also said that the UK Medicines Control Agency (MCA), the body which regulates drug companies, had serious questions to answer about why it had failed to take any action.

Baker said: "The Department of Health and the MCA have completely failed to act in the interests of public health. In their desperate attempts not to undermine the vaccination program, they have tried to sweep all problems under the carpet. As a result, public confidence has been shattered. When will they learn that the answer is not to cover up, but to identify problems and deal with them immediately?"

(Source: The Observer, 22 October 2000, www.newsunlimited.co.uk)